

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A method for introducing and stabilizing heterologous and recombinant genes in a thermophilic host comprising the steps of:

inactivating or deleting a ~~characteristic~~ malate dehydrogenase gene ~~defining host growth rate~~ from said thermophilic host, resulting in a modified thermophilic host having a reduced growth rate; and

inserting a DNA fragment of interest into said modified thermophilic host together with an intact said ~~characteristic~~ malate dehydrogenase gene, whereby host growth rate defined by said characteristic gene is restored to said thermophilic host thereby enabling detection or confirmation of successful transformation using plasmid vectors or integration of said DNA fragment into a chromosome of said thermophilic host.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said thermophilic host is a *Thermus* sp.

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4. (Canceled)

5. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said thermophilic host is *Thermus thermophilus*.

Claims 6-9 (Canceled)

10. (Currently amended) In a *Thermus* strain comprising an inactivated or deleted ~~characteristic~~ malate dehydrogenase gene ~~defining a strain growth rate~~, a method for producing biotechnology products comprising the steps of:

cloning a gene of interest into at least one convenient multiple cloning site of a plasmid or integration vector comprising an intact said ~~characteristic~~ malate dehydrogenase gene, at least one *Thermus* promoter and said at least one convenient multiple cloning site;

transforming said *Thermus* strain with said plasmid or integration vector; and

expressing said gene of interest in said *Thermus* strain using said *Thermus* promoter.

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Claims 11-14 (Canceled)